

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Sermatech International Inc

Connecticut State Technology Extension Program

Clean Manufacturing Equals Good Business at Sermatech International Inc.

Client Profile:

Sermatech International, Inc. specializes in developing and applying engineered, high-performance protective coatings for the aerospace industry. The company employs 80 people at its facility in Manchester, Connecticut.

Situation:

Sermatech initially planned for a Lean Kaizen event to coincide with the purchase of new equipment, but after learning about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Green Suppliers Network (GSN), the company decided this would be a good opportunity to address Lean and clean in a single event. EPA, working in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Commerce, established the GSN to help small and medium-sized manufacturers stay competitive and profitable while reducing their impact on the environment.

Solution:

Green Suppliers Network representatives Judy Wlodarczyk and Bill Kirchherr, of the Connecticut State Technology Extension Program (CONNSTEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, reviewed a Sermatech surface coating process line that sprayed helicopter rotor hubs. The process required the parts to travel a considerable distance, which increased the risk of damage to the coating and required large amounts of rework. The rework cost Sermatech approximately 2 percent of its profit margin, or about \$46,000 annually. Wastes identified for this process included coating overspray, air emissions, spray booth filters, solvent, masking tape, and protective gloves. To improve product movement and reduce travel distance for the parts, the GSN review team recommended that Sermatech install an enclosed environment workstation. This workstation would include new "controlled environment" spray booths that would optimize the facility work space and eliminate the need for the part to travel in the ambient air. By installing these new workstations, Sermatech expects to reduce rework by 75 percent.

Results:

- * Realized \$35,000 in cost savings.
- * Reduced hazardous waste by 30 percent.
- * Saved \$600 in disposal costs.
- * Reduced VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) emissions by 66 percent.
- * Reduced rework by 75 percent.

Testimonial:

"Once OEMs recognize that you put in additional effort to reduce their environmental footprint, it gives you a leg up on the competition, and you can't place a dollar value on that! "

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John Whalen, Former Facility General Manager